

## A Mouse in the House

By Bill Brearley

I can understand the assignment of the role of villain to a mouse by Tchaikowsky in "The Nutcracker Suite." He knew what he was about with this little nuisance.

One morning in late September my better half informed me that she had to clean up the evidence of a mouse, under the sink. I yawned and agreed with her that something must be done. After a week of her protests at the presence of the mouse's morning gifts, I searched out our trusty mouse trap. A dash of peanut butter should have done the job; it surely did in Pickering with the town mice. However the next morning he had not only cleaned the peanut butter out of the trap, but had destroyed some sandwich bags, leaving his usual calling cards.

My wife's usual ingenuity came to the fore. She suggested that I smear the bottom of the trigger with peanut butter. Ah hah, very sneaky, surely even a wily country mouse could not escape such a trap!

In the morning the trap was empty. I had however learned to use a clothespin to hold the spring down and thus not risk my fingers nor shoot the peanut butter up to the ceiling.

Needing further intelligence on the capture of this clever opponent, I dropped in at the early morning coffee club at the Milford General Store. Each of the members had their own secret weapon to defeat the mouse invasion of autumn. One particularly deadly suggestion was, that I ought to tie a piece of raw bacon to the trigger. I could hardly wait to finish my walk around the pond to get home and try John's formula. Somehow raw bacon didn't appeal to me for a midnight snack, but then I'm not a mouse.

Late in the afternoon, when I inspected the trap, ninety percent of the bacon was gone. He had not untied the monofilament, but then neither could I.

Sometime after midnight we heard a sharp report. Yes, the trap was sprung! Neither my wife nor I

wanted to be bothered with the disposal at that late hour. A while later we could hear scraping noises. I tried to ignore them, but herself insisted that I investigate them. Could it be that I had caught a rat in a mouse trap? Armed with small wrecking bar that was being used to disassemble a wall, I entered the kitchen. The light weight floor mat in front of the sink was doing a rather agitated dance in the semi dark. "Ah hah!" said I, as the rug was pulled back to reveal a mouse, with a trap attached to his tail and rear leg. He scuttled under the cupboard before I could grab him. With the aid of a flyswatter I tried to drag him out. Again he fled, wearing the trap, under the fridge. Not wishing to crush him, I gently moved the fridge. He fled like a backfielder into our back room, thence into a hole in the wall. The trap jammed in the hole. Carefully I eased the trap out hoping at last to capture him. As the trap cleared the wall, he slipped out of it, heading into the labyrinth behind the sink.

A strong man can take an ignominious defeat, but when I faced my wife I faced far worse. She believed, because of some careless words of sympathy, that I had expressed, rather in the vein of Robbie Burns, that I had let him go. This was more than I could bear; while not divorce material it certainly deserved a good sulk. After some good-natured bantering, which seemed to resolve the issue, we and the mouse enjoyed a well deserved sleep.

